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ABSTRACT

This study assesses students' perceptions of and performance in sheltered and co-taught classes in an Asian remedial plan in Philadelphia's (Pennsylvania) New Instructional Model (NIM) secondary schools. The study used end-of-year marks and student focus groups to collect data. The focus groups were conducted with 247 Asian limited English proficiency (LEP) students in groups of 5 or 6 attending 7 of the 10 NIM middle schools and high schools in the 1990-91 school year. This number represented 62 percent of Asian LEP students attending sheltered and co-taught classes at Levels 2 and 3. The results indicate that the overwhelming majority of high school and middle school students (79 and 85 percent, respectively) attending sheltered and co-taught classes believes that classes with native English speakers would be more helpful in improving their English skills. Students rank the difficulty of subjects, and analyses of marks confirm their perceptions. Students report receiving academic assistance from tutors and teachers. Students in the co-taught classes are generally positive about the situation. Most students feel they are ready to take classes with native English speakers; however, these students anticipate difficulties with their English skills. Analyses of marks show that a high percentage of the Asian students received passing grades in most content areas. Four tables are included. (JB)

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The School District of Philadelphia

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA
OFFICE OF ASSESSMENT

ASIAN REMEDIAL PLAN

A STUDY OF SHELTERED AND CO-TAUGHT CLASSES
IN NEW INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL SECONDARY SCHOOLS

FINAL REPORT NO. 9202

AUGUST 1991

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ASIAN REMEDIAL PLAN

A STUDY OF SHELTERED AND CO-TAUGHT CLASSES IN NEW INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL SECONDARY SCHOOLS

FINAL REPORT NO. 9202

AUGUST 1991

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report expands on a previous study which reported the findings of classroom observations and teacher interviews conducted in January 1991.[1] Specifically this phase of the study was designed to assess: 1) student perceptions of sheltered and co-taught classes, and 2) student performance in sheltered and co-taught classes as measured by end-of-year marks.

Student focus groups were conducted in seven of the ten New Instructional Model secondary schools. A total of 247 Asian LEP students were interviewed in groups of five or six. This number represented 62% of the ESOL Level 2 and 3 Asian LEP students attending sheltered and co-taught classes at these schools.

The results indicate that the overwhelming majority of high school and middle school students (79% to 85%) attending sheltered and co-taught classes believed that classes with native English speakers would be more helpful in improving their English skills. In addition, students expressed a desire to make American friends and learn more about Americans and American ways.

Students reported that for them the most difficult subjects were Biology (43%) in high school sheltered classes, History (33%) and Science (29%) in high school co-taught classes, and Mathematics in middle school sheltered and co-taught classes (29% and 50% respectively). An analysis of end-of-year marks confirmed these reports.

When asked where they got help in these subjects when they needed it, 37% of the high school students in sheltered classes reported getting help from teachers (usually ESOL), and 35% got help from bilingual tutors. In contrast, 55% of the high school students in co-taught classes reported getting help from teachers (usually ESOL) while 32% reported getting help from bilingual tutors. At the middle school level, 66% of the students in sheltered classes got help from teachers (usually ESOL) and 24% received help from tutors. In the one middle school co-taught class in the sample, seven of the 16 students interviewed received help from teachers and nine received help from tutors.

Students of co-taught classes reported that they thought the two teachers worked well together. One hundred percent (N=73) of the high school students felt that having two teachers in the classroom was beneficial. However, half (n=8) of the middle school students interviewed did not feel that having two teachers was beneficial.

1. A Study of Sheltered and Co-taught Classes in New Instructional Model Secondary Schools. School District of Philadelphia. Interim Report No. 9114, March, 1991

When asked if they felt ready to take classes with native English speakers next year, 66% of the high school students and 56% of the middle school students in sheltered classes indicated that they were ready, but most (79% and 81% respectively) anticipated difficulties, especially with their English skills.

An analysis of student performance, as measured by end-of-year marks, was conducted for all ten New Instructional Model schools. The results show that 83% to 100% of Asian LEP students in sheltered and co-taught classes received passing marks in all content area subjects, with the exception of students taking Mathematics II and Algebra II (offered at Olney High School only). In these two courses, 60% of the students received passing marks.

Subjects which posed the most difficulty for high school students (i.e. where more than 50% received C's, D's, and F's) were American History, Biology, General Mathematics and Algebra II (sheltered classes), and World History and Biology (co-taught classes). At the middle school level, Mathematics and Science posed more difficulty for students in sheltered classes as did Mathematics for students in co-taught classes.

INTRODUCTION

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

In the 1990-1991 school year, seven high schools, three middle schools and 22 elementary schools serving Asian students adopted the New Instructional Models outlined in the Remedial Plan for Services to Asian LEP Students. The plan requires secondary schools to provide sheltered and co-taught classes to LEP students. These secondary schools are University City High, Furness High, South Philadelphia High, Kensington High, Fels High, Olney High, Northeast High, Vare Middle, Cooke Middle and Harding Middle.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study expands on the findings reported in March, 1991 based on classroom observations and interviews with teachers of sheltered and co-taught classes.[1]

Specifically, this phase of the study was designed to assess:

1) student perceptions of sheltered and co-taught classes, and

2) student performance in sheltered and co-taught classes as measured by end-of-year grades.

FOCUS OF THE STUDY

Seven of the ten New Instructional Model secondary schools were selected for in-depth treatment. Student focus groups were conducted at these seven schools. Details of this phase of the study can be found on page 4.

1. A Study of Sheltered and Co-taught Classes in New Instructional Model Secondary Schools. School District of Philadelphia. Interim Report No. 9114, March, 1991

The analysis of student performance in sheltered and co-taught classes includes all ten New Instructional Model secondary schools. Results of this analysis can be found on page 11.

SECTION I: IN-DEPTH STUDY OF STUDENT PERCEPTIONS

METHODOLOGY

Seven of the ten New Instructional Model secondary schools (four high and three middle) were included in the in-depth study. Several student focus groups (each with five or six Asian LEP students) were conducted by the evaluation team at these seven schools in May 1991. Kensington High mainstreamed their ESOL Level 3 students. Focus groups were also conducted with these students to determine how they were faring.

THE SAMPLE

The number of students who participated in these focus groups were as follows:

HIGH SCHOOLS

Sheltered Classes:
UCHS, SPHS, Olney = 86 of 137 (ESOL Level 3) students, i.e. 63%

Co-taught Classes:
UCHS, SPHS, Olney and Kensington = 73 of 157 (ESOL Level 2) students, i.e. 47%

Mainstream Classes:
Kensington = 12 of 17 (ESOL Level 3) students, i.e. 71%

Total High School = 171 students

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Sheltered Classes:
Vare, Cooke, and Harding = 72 of 85 (ESOL Level 3) students, i.e. 85%

Co-taught Classes:
Cooke only = 16 of 17 (ESOL Level 2) students, i.e. 94%

Total Middle School = 88 students

1. IN-DEPTH STUDY OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN SHELTERED CLASSES

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Students were asked: 1) whether they thought classes with other ESOL students were more helpful than classes with native English speakers, 2) what their most difficult subject was, 3) where they got help with this subject when they needed it), 4) whether they felt ready to take classes with native English speakers, and 5) what difficulties they anticipated if they took regular classes next year.

FINDINGS

Seventy-nine percent of the 86 students interviewed felt that classes with native English speakers would be more helpful than classes solely with other ESOL students. These students believed that they would improve their English speaking skills by being forced to hear and speak more English every day. They also felt they would have an opportunity to make friends with American students and learn more about Americans and American ways.

The remaining 21% preferred classes with ESOL students because they felt they could cope better in this setting, preferred the slower pace and were also able to get help from the teacher when they needed it.

When asked which subject was the most difficult for them, 43% of the students said Biology was their most difficult subject, 17% had trouble with History/Social Studies and 15% with Mathematics. A little over one-third of the students (37%) reported getting help in these subjects from the teacher (usually the ESOL teacher) when they needed it. Thirty-five percent reported getting help from bilingual tutors.

Although eighty-one percent of the students anticipated difficulty with their English skills next year, approximately two-thirds (66%) indicated that they felt ready to take classes with native English speakers.

LEVEL 3 STUDENTS WHO WERE MAINSTREAMED

Level 3 students at Kensington High did not attend sheltered classes in 1990-1991. Twelve of the 17 students were interviewed in order to determine how they were faring in mainstream classes.

All 12 students reported that they were receiving passing marks in content area subjects. All but one student indicated that they were doing well and felt that they could keep up with native English speaking students, despite the fact that they still had problems with their English skills, especially spoken English and pronunciation. Eight of the students felt that ESOL classes had been helping them with English; four did not find ESOL classes very helpful.

Seven of the 12 students indicated that they preferred content area classes with a mix of ESOL students and native English speakers. The remaining five preferred classes with ESOL students only.

2. IN-DEPTH STUDY OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN CO-TAUGHT CLASSES

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Students of co-taught classes (ESOL Level 2) were asked: 1) whether they thought classes with other ESOL students were more helpful than classes with native English speakers, 2) how the two teachers in co-taught classes worked together, 3) whether it was helpful to have two teachers in the class, 4) what their most difficult subject was, and 5) where they got help with this subject when they needed it.

FINDINGS

Eighty-five percent of the 73 (ESOL Level 2) students interviewed felt that classes with native English speakers would be more helpful than classes comprised entirely of ESOL students.

When asked how the two teachers worked together in co-taught classes, almost all of the students reported that the teachers worked well together and assumed different roles, e.g. "one teaches, the other explains, writes on the board or helps individual students." All of the students (N=73) felt that having two teachers in the classroom was beneficial.

The most difficult subjects for these students were History (33%) and Science (29%). The majority (55%) reported getting help from the teacher (usually ESOL) when they needed it in these subjects. Thirty-two percent reported getting help from bilingual tutors in these subjects.

3. IN-DEPTH STUDY OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS IN SHELTERED CLASSES

FINDINGS

Eighty-five percent of the 72 middle school students who were interviewed felt that classes with native English speakers would be more helpful than classes comprised solely of ESOL students. Middle school students, like their high school counterparts, believed that they would improve their English skills more rapidly and would become more familiar with American customs if they were in classes with native English speakers.

When asked which subject was the most difficult, 29% indicated Mathematics, 18% indicated Health, 18% Science, 14% Social Studies and 8% English.

Sixty-six percent of the students reported that they got help from the teacher (usually ESOL) when they needed it in these subjects. Twenty-four percent turned to bilingual tutors for help when they needed it.

Although most of the students (79%) anticipated difficulties next year, primarily with their English skills, the majority (56%) felt that they were ready to take classes with native English speakers. At one middle school some students were apprehensive about being harassed by other students, although they anticipated no academic difficulties.

4. IN-DEPTH STUDY OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS IN CO-TAUGHT CLASSES

Only two co-taught classes were operating at the three middle schools in May 1991, one class for ESOL Level 1 students and one class for ESOL Level 2 students. Focus groups were conducted with 16 of the 17 Level 2 students.

FINDINGS

Fifteen of the 16 students interviewed felt that classes with native English speakers would be more helpful than classes comprised solely of ESOL students.

Most of the students reported that the two teachers worked well together, but half (N=8) of the students felt that having two teachers was of no benefit.

When asked what their most difficult subject was, half reported Mathematics (N=8) and four said Social Studies. Most (N=9) of the students reported getting help from the bilingual tutor if they needed it, and seven reported getting help from their teachers.

SECTION II: AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENT MARKS (END-OF-YEAR) IN SHELTERED AND CO-TAUGHT CLASSES

Table 1

HIGH SCHOOLS
SHELTERED CLASSES

Percentages of Asian LEP Students Receiving Marks A-F
in Content Area Subjects, Final Report Period, 1991

CONTENT AREA	ESOL LEVEL	NO. OF PUPILS	% RECEIVING PASSING MARKS A/B	C/D	% RECEIVING FAILING MARK F
AMERICAN HISTORY	3	175	34	49	17
WORLD HISTORY					
Olney High only	2-3	37	76	21	3
Fels High only	1-2	8	63	38	0
GENERAL PHYS. SCIENCE					
UCHS and Olney High	2-3	46	61	35	4
BIOLOGY	2-3	130	48	45	7
Northeast High only	1	9	22	66	11
GENERAL MATH. I					
Olney High only	2-3	44	39	48	13
GENERAL MATH. II					
Olney High only	2-3	15	40	20	40
ALGEBRA I					
Olney High only	2-3	39	77	15	8
ALGEBRA II					
Olney High only	2-3	25	28	32	40
HEALTH/PHYS. ED.	2-3	140	77	17	6

Findings: . Percentages of students receiving passing marks ranged from 83% to 100%, with the exception of students taking Mathematics II and Algebra II, where 60% received passing marks.

. The majority of ESOL Level 2 and 3 students received A's and B's in World History (76%), Health/Physical Education (77%), General Physical Science (61%), and Algebra I (77%).

. Percentages of students receiving A's and B's were lower for American History (34%), Biology (48% for Levels 2-3; 22% for Level 1); General Mathematics I (39%); General Mathematics II (40%) and Algebra II (28%).

Table 2

HIGH SCHOOLS
CO-TAUGHT CLASSES

Percentages of Asian LEP Students Receiving Marks A-F
in Content Area Subjects, Final Report Period, 1991

CONTENT AREA	ESOL LEVEL	NO. OF PUPILS	% RECEIVING PASSING MARKS A/B	C/D	% RECEIVING FAILING MARK F
WORLD HISTORY	2-3	122	45	49	6
GENERAL PHYS. SCIENCE	2-3	126	57	35	8
BIOLOGY Olney High only	2-3	27	37	48	15
MATH ORIENTATION Furness, SPHS	1	23	52	48	0

Findings: . The overwhelming majority of high school students attending co-taught classes received passing marks, i.e. 85% to 100%.

. More students received A's and B's in General Physical Science (57%) than in World History (45%) and Biology (37%).

. 52% of the ESOL Level 1 students taking Orientation to Mathematics received A's and B's. In addition, eight students at Furness progressed well enough during the year to receive a General Mathematics mark and were not included in the table count.

Table 3

MIDDLE SCHOOLS
SHELTERED CLASSES

Percentages of Asian LEP Students Receiving Marks A-F
in Content Area Subjects, Final Report period 1991

CONTENT AREA	ESOL LEVEL	NO. OF PUPILS	% RECEIVING PASSING MARKS A/B	C/D	% RECEIVING FAILING MARK F
SOCIAL STUDIES	3	77	79	18	3
SCIENCE	3	68*	37	50	13
MATHEMATICS Harding Middle only	1-2	9	100	--	--
MATHEMATICS	3	75	44	41	15

*Marks for students taking sheltered Science at Harding were not posted on the computerized file.

Findings:
- The overwhelming majority of middle school students in sheltered classes received passing marks, i.e. 85% to 100%.
- Far more ESOL Level 3 students received A's and B's in Social Studies (79%) than they did in Mathematics (44%) and Science (37%).
- The 9 ESOL Level 1 and 2 students at Harding Middle School all received A's and B's in Mathematics.

Table 4

MIDDLE SCHOOLS
CO-TAUGHT CLASSES

Percentages of Asian LEP Students Receiving Marks A-F
in Content Area Subjects, Final Report period, 1991

CONTENT AREA	ESOL LEVEL	NO. OF PUPILS	% RECEIVING PASSING MARKS A/B	C/D	% RECEIVING FAILING MARK F
MATHEMATICS Cooke and Vare	1	55	39	49	13
MATHEMATICS Cooke only	2	19	48	48	5

Findings:. The overwhelming majority of middle school students taking co-taught Mathematics classes received passing marks, i.e. 88% to 96%.

. More than 50% of the students, however, received marks at the lower end of the scale (C's, D's and F's).